



# Illinois



**899,185**

Children age 0-5



**45,060\***

Members of the early childhood teaching workforce

Early educators are engaged in incredibly difficult and complex work that has been recognized as essential to children’s learning and development, supportive for families, and foundational to the economy. In the best of times, educators do this work in conditions that undermine their well-being, and the COVID-19 pandemic has only deepened the harm caused to this workforce, nearly all of whom are women. Adequate public investment and state policies that appropriately prepare, support, and compensate the early education workforce can remedy these dire conditions by establishing systems that benefit early educators and the children they care for and teach.

| Occupation           | Median Wage |
|----------------------|-------------|
| Child care worker    | \$11.16     |
| Preschool teacher    | \$14.29     |
| Center director      | \$24.44     |
| Kindergarten teacher | \$32.12     |
| Elementary teacher   | \$34.76     |
| All U.S. occupations | \$19.74     |

## Earnings by Occupation

- ▶ In 2019, the median wage for child care workers was \$11.16, **a 1% decrease since 2017.**
- ▶ For preschool teachers, the median wage was \$14.29, **with no change since 2017.**
- ▶ For preschool or child care center directors, the median wage was \$24.44, **a 3% decrease since 2017.**

## Early educators pay a penalty for working with younger children.

Illinois early educators with a bachelor’s degree are paid 30.1 percent less than their colleagues in the K-8 system. The poverty rate for early educators in Illinois is 17.8 percent, much higher than for Illinois workers in general (8.3 percent) and 8.5 times as high as for K-8 teachers (2.1 percent).\*\*



## Interested in learning more?

- To see how Illinois compares to other states, visit our [State Explorer](#).
- [View the 2020 Early Childhood Workforce Index](#) to learn more about each policy area.
- For an overview of data sources for the indicators listed below, see [Appendix 1: Data Sources & Methodology](#).

## Early Childhood Workforce Policies

|   |  |   |                 |
|---|--|---|-----------------|
| Qualifications & Educational Supports:<br><b>Edging Forward</b> | Pre-K  | BA minimum for lead teacher?                        | Yes             |
|   |  | CDA/equivalent minimum for assistant teacher?       | No              |
|   | Licensed centers                             | BA minimum for director?                            | No              |
|   |  | BA minimum for lead teacher?                        | No              |
|   | Licensed homes                               | CDA/equivalent minimum for assistant teacher?       | No              |
|   |  | BA minimum for lead teacher?                        | No              |
|   | Scholarships to support educational pathways | CDA/equivalent minimum for assistant teacher?       | No              |
|   |  | BA?   | Yes             |
|   |  | AA?   | Yes             |
|   |  | CDA or equivalent?                                  | Yes             |
| Work Environments:<br><b>Stalled</b>                            | Centers                                      | Collects data on scholarship recipients?            | Yes             |
|   |  | Paid time in professional development?              | No              |
|   |  | Paid planning and/or preparation time?              | No              |
|   | Homes  | Salary schedule/benefits?                           | No              |
|   |  | Paid time in professional development?              | No              |
|   |  | Paid planning and/or preparation time?              | No              |
| Compensation & Financial Relief Strategies:<br><b>Stalled</b>   |  | Salary schedule/benefits?                           | No              |
|   |  | Salary parity for publicly funded pre-K teachers?   | No parity       |
|   |  | Compensation standards required?                    | No              |
|   |  | Compensation guidelines or plans to develop?        | Yes: guidelines |
|   |  | Earmarks for salaries in public funding?            | No              |
|   |  | Financial relief: Stipend or tax credit?            | Yes             |
| Workforce Data:<br><b>Making Headway</b>                        | Registry                                     | Financial relief: Bonus?                            | No              |
|   |  | Inclusive of all licensed settings?                 | Licensed only   |
|   |  | Collects wage data?                                 | Yes             |
|   |  | Collects benefits data?                             | No              |
|   |  | Collects race/ethnicity data?                       | Yes             |
|   | Survey                                       | Reports data publicly?                              | Yes             |
|   |  | Inclusive of all licensed settings?                 | Licensed +      |
|   |  | Collects wage data?                                 | Yes             |
|   |  | Collects benefits data?                             | Yes             |
|   |  | Collects race/ethnicity data?                       | Yes             |
| Financial Resources:<br><b>Stalled</b>                          |  | Reports data publicly?                              | Yes             |
|   |  | State reported extra CCDF spending?                 | No              |
|   |  | Ratio of per-child pre-K to K-12 spending over 50%? | No              |

## Family & Income Support Policies

|   |  |     |
|---|--|-----|
| Income Supports:<br><b>Stalled</b>              | Refundable earned income tax credit?                     | Yes |
|   | Higher than federal minimum wage, indexed for inflation? | No  |
|   | Refundable child care tax credit?                        | No  |
| Health & Well-Being Supports:<br><b>Stalled</b> | Paid sick days law?                                      | No  |
|   | Paid family leave law?                                   | No  |
|   | Expanded Medicaid eligibility?                           | Yes |

## Notes

\*Early educators work in public- and private-sector homes, centers, and schools. This estimate includes the following occupations as defined by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Occupational Employment Statistics: “child care workers,” “preschool teachers, excluding special education,” “preschool teachers, special education,” “education administrators: preschool/child care center programs.” These data do not include the self-employed, although home-based child care assistants, who are employees, are likely included in the “child care worker” category. This estimate is from 2019 and does not reflect employment changes as a result of the pandemic. Demographic characteristics such as race/ethnicity and gender are not reported due to a lack of comparable data across states. State-based surveys or registries may provide more comprehensive estimates of the ECE workforce.

\*\*Gould, E., Whitebook, M., Mokhiber, Z., & Austin, L. (2020). *Financing Early Educator Quality: A Values-Based Budget for Every State*. A series of state-by-state reports produced by the Economic Policy Institute and University of California Berkeley’s Center for the Study of Child Care Employment. Retrieved from <https://cscce.berkeley.edu/financing-early-educator-quality-a-values-based-budget-for-every-state/>.